In The Claims

1-17.   (Previously Cancelled)

18.   (Previously Amended) A method of separating individual circuit boards from a multiple board array with pre-scored planes comprising:

aligning one of the pre-scored planes with a splitting element,

affixing a removable shield element to an individual circuit board portion of the multiple board array;

loading the removable shield element to reduce board flex; and

inducing torque on the multiple board array such that the multiple board array is forced onto the splitting element and breaks along the pre-scored plane.

19.   (Previously Cancelled)

20.   (Previously Amended)   An apparatus for separating individual circuit board from a multiple board array with pre-scored planes and a plurality of electrical components comprising:

at least one splitting element positioned along one of the pre-scored planes; and

at least one torque inducing element using surface loading to mechanically force the multiple board array onto said at least one splitting element and thereby breaking the multiple board array along the pre-scored plane said at least one torque inducing element forcing the multiple board array without loading the plurality of electrical components, wherein said torque inducing element applies said surface loading to the multiple board array by way of a shield element attached to the individual circuit board such that the plurality of electrical components remain undamaged; and

a transport element for automatically aligning one of the pre-scored planes with said at least one splitting element.

21.   (Previously Amended) A method of separating individual circuit boards from a multiple board array with pre-scored planes comprising:

aligning one of the pre-scored planes with a splitting element, and

inducing torque on the multiple board array such that the multiple board array is forced onto the splitting element and breaks along the pre-scored plane, wherein said inducing torque on the multiple board array includes transferring load from a torque inducing element through a shield element into a portion of the multiple board array.